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A LOST SECTION OF THE FRIEZE OF THE ARCH OF TITUS?

A DRAWING of the late sixteenth century at Windsor (*B. A. I.*, 25), measuring $16 \times 7\frac{3}{4}$ inches, and therefore of unusual size, reproduces a lost section of a Roman triumphal frieze of unusual interest. This pen and wash drawing seems of more than ordinary accuracy and to have caught the style of the original better than was usually the case. This is especially valuable because it seems to be the only remaining trace of the original.

There are parts of five figures in the fragment. The two on the extreme left are bearing a *ferculum* on their shoulders. Only one of the poles is represented: a second pad is placed on the shoulder of the end figure. The *ferculum* extended behind them, but that part of the relief was evidently badly injured. We see the fore part of two spirited horses, evidently standing on the *ferculum*, and part of a quadriga or some other precious work of art that was being carried among the triumphal spoils. In front of the two bearers is a *togatus*, who turns and looks back as he proceeds, as if to direct the march, as such figures do in the frieze of the arch of Titus and that of the arch at Beneventum. In front of him are two other processionists in long togas who are made to seem on a higher level either through the carelessness of the draughtsman or because there was at this point a *ressaut* in the entablature above an engaged column which might produce this illusion, as any one can see by looking, for instance, at photographs of the Beneventum frieze. All the figures but one are broken off about at the knee. They all wear the triumphal wreath.

It is somewhat hazardous to deduce stylistic characteristics from such a drawing, but we may venture to note the following:

- (1) The figures are all on a single plane and seem in high relief;
- (2) They are in general widely spaced so that some background does or would appear between them;
- (3) There is a fair amount of head-room, about 20 per cent;
- (4) The figures are rather thick-set and vigorous and their faces are either clean-shaven or, in two cases, have a slight down

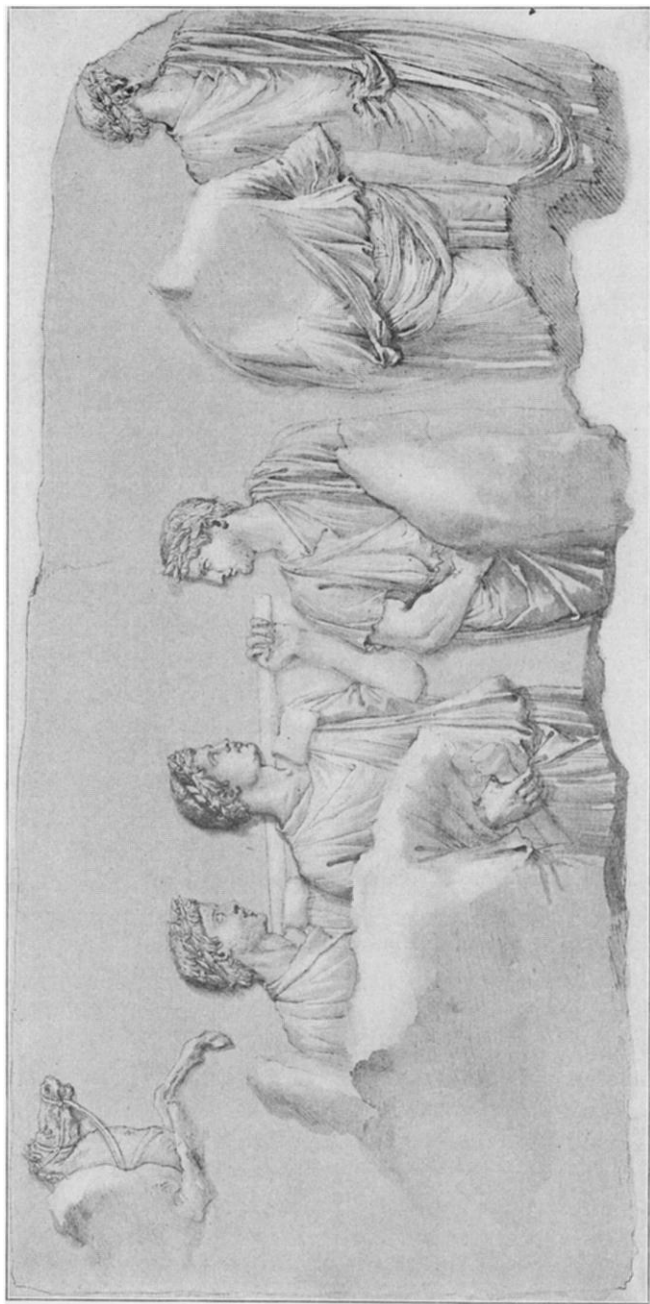


FIGURE 1.—DRAWING AT WINDSOR

on the cheek which does not interfere with the outline and the existence of which in the original we are inclined to doubt;

(5) The drapery falls in rather close, sharp folds, deeply cut in the somewhat tormented style often used in metal sculpture, with a marked peculiarity in the arrangement of the folds at the neck.

In what period do we find these characteristics, especially in frieze sculpture?

We exclude at once the Augustan age, because its well-known characteristics as embodied in the *Ara Pacis* are quite different.



FIGURE 2.—FROM THE FRIEZE OF THE ARCH OF TITUS

In it the figures are on two planes instead of one, overlap one another very considerably, have drapery that falls in easier and shallower folds, and stand with practically no head-room. Nor, on the other hand, could they possibly be the product of the age of Trajan, when the complete triumphal procession of the arch of Beneventum gives norms quite as different in other ways; an even greater relief, with figures on two very distinct planes, often partly in front of one another, with an effort at plane-perspective and greater rounding of surfaces and an attempt at illusion and rapid movement. Of later periods, such as the Antonine, it would be idle to speak.

There remain therefore only the Claudian and the Flavian cycles between the Augustan and Trajanic series. Of the Claudian, we know as yet too little, practically nothing of its frieze sculpture. With the Flavian period we have become fairly well acquainted, especially during the past decade; though, singularly enough, the wonderful frieze of the Female Industries in the Forum of Nerva, a masterpiece of Domitianic art, has

received but little attention.¹ Both here and in the badly ruined remnants of the triumphal frieze of the arch of Titus, the dominant characteristic of a single plane with inter-spacing of the figures is the same as in our drawing. If we extend the comparison to the keystone and the large reliefs of the arch of Titus we note also the same treatment of drapery, with tormented edges and deeply cut, close folds. The peculiar folding at the neck is duplicated on the Titus frieze. There may seem to be an occasional exception to the rule of the single plane in the frieze of Titus, but it is more apparent than real, for the bull or the figure that appears against the background is merely silhouetted. It may even be a question whether in making the drawing of this



FIGURE 3.—FROM THE FRIEZE OF THE ARCH OF TITUS

fragment the Renaissance artist did not omit some figures lightly silhouetted in the background of the original slab. This seems probable if we stop to consider that part of the procession in the relief with the seven-branched candlestick on the Arch of Titus, which has the *fercula*; it would seem as if we should insert two carriers in silhouette on our relief back of these that the artist has given in high relief.

It would be useless to conjecture whether this slab belonged to the arch of Titus that still remains, or to his arch in the Circus Maximus which existed in the Middle Ages, or whether it was a relic of one of the numerous arches of Domitian like that to which the *Trofei di Mario* on the Capitol originally belonged. It is more likely, on the whole, that it belonged to the Arch of Titus, and this fragment would supplement the similar group on the

¹ I am preparing a reproduction of a series of water-colors of this frieze made about 1600, when it was in better preservation.

remaining part of the frieze which has men carrying a *ferculum* with the statue of a river god. There is on the arch a similar *togatus* turning backward. As not one of the figures in high relief on the arch has preserved its head, the heads on our fragment would be important. We know that the frieze originally extended around the entire arch of Titus, as is the case at Beneventum. What at present remains above the central arcade is less than a quarter of the whole. The two cuts, Figures 2 and 3, will illustrate the similarities in spacing, in drapery, in poses, in the proportions of the figures. Until the sixteenth century, the arch was partly masked by a mediaeval fortification of the Frangipani, which still appears in part in the sketches of Du Perac and others in the time of the Renaissance. When this masonry was torn down many fragments of the arch may have been brought away with it and dispersed. This drawing would seem to date from a time shortly after the dismantling, as its fragmentary condition precludes the idea that the relief was *in situ*. Where the relief went we do not know. The drawing was made in Rome and was part of the Barberini collection; it was purchased for the collection made by King George III.

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